

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Claims 21, 26, and 29 are amended. All of the pending claims are presented below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Please enter these claims as amended.

**Listing of the Claims:**

1. (Withdrawn) A process for modulating virulence of a *Streptococcus* comprising:  
modifying a genomic fragment of the *Streptococcus*;  
wherein at least part of the genomic fragment is capable of hybridizing to the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 21; and  
generating a clone having the modified genomic fragment.
- 2.-5. (Canceled).
6. (Withdrawn) The process according to claim 1, wherein modifying the genomic fragment comprises functionally deleting the at least part of the genomic fragment capable of hybridizing to the nucleotide sequence.
7. (Withdrawn) A clone of a *Streptococcus*, obtained by the process according to claim 1.
8. (Canceled).
9. (Withdrawn) A process for assaying virulence of a *Streptococcus* comprising:  
assaying an ability of the *Streptococcus* to infect a subject;  
wherein the *Streptococcus* comprises a genomic fragment associated with a virulence factor to infect a subject; and  
wherein at least part of the genomic fragment is capable of hybridizing to the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 21.

10.-20. (Canceled).

21. (Currently Amended) An isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule comprising:

a nucleotide sequence of *Streptococcus suis* origin

wherein the nucleotide sequence comprises a contiguous sequence which hybridizes to the full length of nucleotides 89-263 of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:37 at 65°C in a buffer having 0.5 M sodium phosphate, 1 mM EDTA, and 7% sodium dodecyl sulphate at a pH of 7.2,

wherein the nucleic acid molecule remains hybridized after

washing twice with a buffer containing 40 mM sodium phosphate (pH 7.2), 1 mM EDTA and 5% sodium dodecyl sulphate for 30 minutes at 65°C and;

washing twice with a buffer containing 40 mM sodium phosphate (pH 7.2), 1 mM EDTA and 1% sodium dodecyl sulphate for 30 minutes at 65°C, and

wherein the complement of the nucleotide sequence encodes for a portion of a fibronectin-/fibrinogen-binding protein of *Streptococcus suis*.

22. (Previously Presented) A vector comprising the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 21.

23. (Previously Presented) A host cell comprising the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 21.

24. (Previously Presented) The host cell of claim 23, wherein the host cell is of a *Streptococcus* origin.

25. (Previously Presented) A composition comprising the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 21.

26. (Currently Amended) The complement of the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim [[11]] 21.

27. (Previously Presented) The complement of the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 21.

28. (Withdrawn) An isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule comprising:  
a nucleotide sequence for a fibronectin-/fibrinogen-binding protein of *Streptococcus suis*,  
wherein the nucleotide sequence comprises the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:37.

29. (Withdrawn and Currently Amended) An isolated or recombinant double stranded nucleic acid molecule comprising:

a gene encoding [[for]] a fibronectin-/fibrinogen-binding protein; and

a means for hybridizing to the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:37 at 65°C in a buffer having 0.5 M sodium phosphate, 1 mM EDTA, and 7% sodium dodecyl sulphate at a pH of 7.2,  
wherein the means remains hybridized after

washing twice with a buffer containing 40 mM sodium phosphate (pH 7.2), 1 mM EDTA and 5% sodium dodecyl sulphate for 30 minutes at 65°C; and

washing twice with a buffer containing 40 mM sodium phosphate (pH 7.2), 1 mM EDTA and 1% sodium dodecyl sulphate for 30 minutes at 65°C.